

EAST-WEST TRADE

## CIA Gets Soviet Assist In Count of Gas Stations

From News Dispatches

MOSCOW, March 23—Have American spies in Russia goofed?

Two Soviet newsmen thought so and set out to help, leading to a clash of words between the alleged American cloak-and-dagger men and Russian tongue-in-cheek men.

The Soviet reporters said the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency was assigned for a change a non-top secret job of snooping out how many gasoline stations there are in Moscow.

The CIA reported, the Russians said, that there were only eight stations to serve Moscow's 6.5 million people. So to put them straight, the two Soviet journalists went around taking pictures of the service stations.

"We are working for the CIA," said the two in a Literary Gazette article, signed "Amateur Spies V. Ostrovsky and M. Thakhman."

"A CIA agent has been given a complicated task: to find out the exact number of gas stations in Moscow. Maybe Mr. X is lazy by nature. Maybe he can count only with his fingers, but he hasn't coped with his task."

At the end of a day, the Russians had pictures of 99.

This didn't settle the problem, so Western correspondents made their count. They found that many of the 99 stations sold gasoline only to

trucks or official cars, and only 42 sold to the ordinary motorists.

Moreover, only two stations sell high-octane gasoline suitable for Western cars, the rest low-grade fuel. And only one of the two would sell gasoline without State-issued coupons.

[According to the Greater Washington Retail Service Station Association, there are about 1400 gasoline stations in the area and some 500 in the District.]